



New Screening Measures for Ebola

Information provided by Department of Homeland Security's Customs & Border Protection

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Homeland Security's Customs & Border Protection (CBP) this week will begin new layers of entry screening at five U.S. airports that receive over 94 percent of travelers from the Ebola-affected nations of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. CDC will implement a tracking program for people entering the United States from these countries.

- New York's JFK International Airport will begin the new screening this week, with pilot testing first. In the 12 months ending July 2014, JFK received nearly half of travelers from the three West African nations. The enhanced entry screening at Washington-Dulles, Newark, Chicago-O'Hare, and Atlanta international airports will be implemented next week.
- CDC is sending additional staff to each of the five airports and the new measures begin with CBP officers reviewing travelers' passports. After passport review:
 - o Travelers from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone will be escorted by CBP to an area of the airport set aside for screening.
 - o Trained CBP staff will observe them for signs of illness, ask them a series of health and exposure questions and provide health information for Ebola and reminders to monitor themselves for symptoms. U.S. Coast Guard trained medical staff will take their temperature with a non-contact thermometer.
 - o If the travelers have fever or other symptoms or the health questionnaire reveals possible Ebola exposure, they will be evaluated by a CDC quarantine station public health officer. The public health officer will again take a temperature reading and make a public health assessment.
 - o Ill travelers may be transferred to a health care facility for further evaluation, examination, testing, and treatment as appropriate.
 - o Travelers without symptoms but with a possible Ebola exposure will be linked with a health department for active monitoring for 21 days, the longest time it can take from the time a person is infected with Ebola until that person has symptoms. A person can spread Ebola only after symptoms appear.
 - o Travelers from these countries who have neither symptoms/fever nor a known history of exposure will be required to complete a daily temperature log.

- Entry screening is part of a layered process that includes exit screening and standard public health practices such as patient isolation and contact tracing in countries with Ebola outbreaks. Successful containment of the recent Ebola outbreaks in Nigeria and DRC demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach.

- In addition, exit screening measures have been implemented in the affected West African countries, and CDC experts have worked closely with local authorities to implement these measures. Since the beginning of August, CDC has been working with airlines, airports, ministries of health, and other partners to provide technical assistance for the development of exit screening and travel restrictions in countries with Ebola. This includes:

- o Assessing the capacity to conduct exit screening at international airports;

- o Assisting countries with procuring supplies needed to conduct exit screening;

- o Supporting with development of exit screening protocols;

- o Developing tools such as posters, screening forms, and job-aids; and

- o Training staff on exit screening protocols and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Today, all outbound passengers are screened for Ebola symptoms in the affected countries. Such primary exit screening involves travelers responding to a travel health questionnaire, being visually assessed for potential illness, and having their body temperature measured. In the last two months since exit screening began in the three countries, of 36,000 people screened, 77 people were denied boarding a flight because of the health screening process. None of the 77 passengers were infected with Ebola and many were diagnosed as ill with malaria, a disease common in West Africa, transmitted by mosquitoes and not contagious from one person to another.

- Exit screening at airports in countries affected by Ebola remains the principle means of keeping travelers from spreading Ebola to other nations. All three of these nations have asked for, and continue to receive, CDC assistance in strengthening exit screening.